1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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nothing to show that they had long been in the Saskatchewan region. All that is certain of their previous past is their closer relationship to the Arapaho than to any other tribe; and the origin of the Arapaho is equally obscure, except that it is certain that, if they came from the north and east, it was a long time ago. Of the Gros Ventre it can only be said that, while related to the Arapaho and regarded by them as almost politically a part of themselves, they were far separated from them when first known, with them for a short time later, and again separated, and in contact and alliance with another much more distantly related Algonkin branch. Their habitat in a hundred years has been successively near the Saskatchewan, the Platte, and the Missouri. There is nothing to show that such variability of affiliation and location within the culture region of the Plains has not been characteristic of their previous history.

The Gros Ventre call the tribes near them by the following names: Arapaho, hinan'ăn (in Arapaho, hinanaci-na"); Cheyenne, itisin, "scars" (itiso", "a scar;" Arapaho name of the Cheyenne, hitaciina"); Cree, na"tsa", "rabbits;" Ojibwā, djinhuna"tsa", "Lower Cree;" the three Blackfoot tribes, waotă"nixtănăts, "black-feet" (a Blackfoot, waotă"nixtănin, "black-foot-man;" a Piegan, tsă"t'; the Bloods, ka"winahaa"); Assiniboine, na"djincihin; Sioux, na"wina"djinci, "Below-Assiniboine" (in Arapaho, na"tinci, "a Sioux"); Crow, hoonen, "crow-men;" Minitari, wuxnokayan, "—lodges;" Shoshone, sosoyanin, "snake-men;" Bannock, waotă"nixiinin, "black-men" (in Arapaho the Ute are called wrotănahiçi, "black"); Flathead Salish, kankaănin, "flathead-man;" Nezpercé, taniibats, "pierced-nose" (Arapaho taniibnaçi is the Caddo). Two tribes to the southwest or perhaps west, which have not been identified, are the wasoi"hiiyeihits, "grass-dwellers," who live in houses of grass or brush; and the na"wuxa-anihiina"ts, "fish-eaters."

The Gros Ventre were divided into groups similar to those of the Blackfeet and Sioux. The names of these bands were nicknames, and in no way totemic. As there was prohibition of marriage within the band, the name "clan" is, however, applicable to them. Descent was paternal and a man belonged to his father's band; but the prohibition of marriage extended also to his mother's clan, all the members of both the father's and mother's clan being considered relatives. Each band seems to have had a recognized head or chief. During the winter the tribe broke into smaller groups, consisting of one or perhaps more clans, which followed the buffalo, and camped chiefly in the timber. There corrals were made for the horses at night to prevent their being stolen by war-parties. When summer came, the clans joined and camped together in the large camp-circle. In this, the opening of which was toward the east, the different bands had definite

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

000 The Gros Ventre system of terms of relationship has been given in a 605 former publication.[1]

601 Cousins, so far as the relationship was known, were called brothers and sisters, and they called each other's children son or daughter if the cousin was of the same sex as the speaker, or nephew or niece if the cousin was of [582] the opposite sex. Any known relationship was a bar to marriage. The [587] brother of a dead man sometimes married his widow, but this was not always the case.

583 Large amounts of property, especially horses, were given away for wives for the honor of the act, but there was no rule or definite custom covering the quantity of property so given. The horses might be given not only to the father, but to the brothers, uncles, and other relatives of the girl. Sometimes, without having received any gifts and apparently without any previous understanding, a man would give his daughter to a young man, who thereupon would give him horses, or distribute them among his wife's other relatives. Old men practised this custom in order to obtain the aid and services of a young man in caring for their horses and in other ways, and no doubt 585 sometimes also to insure a more certain food-supply. A young man on 431 marrying received a tent with all the proper furniture, usually from his prospective parents-in-law, but sometimes from his own parents, if they were the wealthier.

606 Although a young married man often lived with his father-in-law, the [591] well-known taboo custom between mother-in-law and son-in-law — which forbade their speaking, looking at each other, or being in the same tent — existed among the Gros Ventre. There was, however, no father-in-law taboo. The mother-in-law taboo extended to the son-in-law's brother.

584 If a woman did not wish a man for her lover, she might send him to do a 721 certain act of bravery. If he returned successfully from war, having accomplished the deed, he was then accepted. This custom is said to have led to the death of many young men.

428 At a person's death his property was inherited generally by his relatives. His father and mother, brothers, sisters, and children would receive part. His father and mother received the most. A man often disposed of his property before his death. If he died suddenly, as on being killed in war, his parents divided his property. It was not customary for a man on going to war to divide his property among his relatives in the contingency of his [764] death. Property particularly valued by the dead person was buried with him.

[1] Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part I, pp. 9, 180.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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added prestige. Those mentioned as leading bands above were seemingly the most numerous and most prominent in the recent past, and their representatives are more numerous at the present time. While the Frozens, Upper Quarters and Bad Plenty have the most living descendants, apparently there are no Poor Greys or Coffees today, only one Night Hawk, and a few each of the others.

Although Coming Daylight and Singer claimed membership in the Frozen band, they had no false modesty in proclaiming: "The Frozens were the best workers, had the biggest lodges, the prettiest women and the best-looking men. In fact they were the 'aristocratic' families, being the best-dressed and having the most horses." This was confirmed voluntarily by Cora who stated that she belonged to the Same As Assiniboines, but had heard all her life that the Frozens were the most distinguished band along the lines the old women mentioned. The men informants admitted that some bands were considered better in some respects than others, but failed to be more specific, and added that regardless of the reputation of the whole band, an individual man had to make his own way.

It is somewhat difficult to arrive at the exact situation as to band affiliation and exogamy inasmuch as the band ceased to function not long after our oldest male informants were born. Our oldest female informants, whose memory includes the 1860's, stated in regard to this individual or that, whom they mentioned, that they could not remember to which band he had belonged. In fact the old women became quite impatient when questioned on this subject since from their point of view it was not important. To them the question of marriage regulations was a practical one of avoiding as mate any person to whom blood relationship could be traced, no matter how remotely, and any affinal relative not of the same generation.

There was general agreement among all informants, however, that under normal circumstances children were of the same band as their father.[3] Nevertheless, residence was an important factor, and not a few persons claimed affiliation with bands other than those into which they had been born. Coming Daylight, for instance, said she was a Frozen, the band to which her mother had

[3] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 147.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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621 belonged. She was orphaned at an early age and was raised by
597 her maternal grandmother under the protection of her mother's brother, Crow Bull, a prominent member of the Frozen band. Garter Snake claimed to be a Tendon, likewise the band into which her mother had been born, although her father, Bull Lodge, a so-called "Hudson Bay Company breed," was classed as a Frozen. If a child were adopted by, and remained during his childhood days with, a family of another band than that into which his real father had been born, he became a member of the adopting band. For instance, Lame Bull adopted a boy whose father belonged to a different band, but the boy was always known as a member of Lame Bull's band, the Upper Quarters.

[591] One informant stated that when a woman married she became a
621 member of her husband's band, but this statement refers in all probability merely to the fact that patrilocal residence was often practiced. Each of our older women informants stated as her band the one in which she grew up. When speaking of their husbands, these women, each of whom had survived several mates, seldom mentioned their band affiliations, unless asked specifically, nor did they mention to which of the soldier societies their several husbands had belonged. One gathers the very distinct impression
[602] that the kinship bonds were the all-important social relationships so far as Gros Ventres women were concerned, and that the wider political and social groupings did not impinge very directly on their lives.

621 All informants stated that one should not marry into the band in which he claimed membership and in which he was brought up.
582 There was a difference of opinion among them, however, as to whether one might marry into his mother's band providing he had not been raised therein and no blood relationship could be traced.[3] The Boy stated positively that a man who would so much as flirt with a young woman of his mother's band would be disliked. Charles Buckman differed, holding that any marriage would be proper, providing the far-reaching incest taboos based on blood and affinal relationship be observed. The Boy admitted that, because of changes which occurred in band affiliation, occasionally a person would take a wife from some other band than that of either

[3] Kroeber, 1908, p. 147, prohibition of marriage extended to mother's clan.

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his father or mother and still discover later that she was related to him. The Boy's own experience illustrates this. The Boy is an Upper Quarters as was his father, and his mother was a Frozen. It so happened that his mother's father was one of three brothers who were Frozens. The grandson of one of these three brothers married a Bad Plenty and stayed with his wife's band so long a time that he was known as a member of the Bad Plenty and his children took that affiliation. The Boy married one of the daughters of this family, a woman known as a member of the Bad Plenty. Only after several years of married life did they one day discover that The Boy had married his maternal grandfather's brother's great-granddaughter! Charles Buckman, whose father was a white man, and whose mother, a Bad Plenty, later married a Water Horses man, took Charles there to live, and he claimed affiliation with the latter band. He married a Bad Plenty woman, however, and discovered years later that his wife was remotely related to him on his mother's side. It seems certain that in former times, when the bands were functioning, an Upper Quarters would not marry an Upper Quarters, that is, that an individual would not marry into his own band; but beyond this, apparently only known blood and most types of affinal relationship were bars to marriage.

Within the band, close relatives usually camped in proximity, whether residence was matrilocal or patrilocal. The general consensus of opinion among our informants was that most of the persons within a band were related to each other. Band members would not wager against each other for high stakes in gambling, and sometimes the whole band might become involved as a unit in case of blood revenge.

Chief or Leader

The term "chief" was employed to designate any man who had distinguished himself in war.[4] Each band then might have several or many such "chiefs," but among them would be one recognized as leader, "he who takes us around," that is, the one who directed the band when it moved from place to place.[5] This function seems

[4] The Gros Ventre term is *nätcä* (m. s.) *näkyä* (w. s.). For linguistic shift between men's and women's speech, see Flannery, 1946, pp. 133–34.

[5] The Gros Ventre term is *ninä'ninänä:titc* (m. s.). Kroeber, 1908,

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ties of the larger society which the company had joined. Meanwhile another group was meeting informally before it was admitted into one or other of the Societies. Since the Stars and Wolf-men were approximately even in number, there probably was a regular alternation. According to reasonable estimate, the Potbellies joined the Stars about 1840; the next group of young men would then have joined the Wolves, say in 1843 or 1844; the following company joining the Stars in about 1849–50.

If the Sacred Dances, except the Sacrifice Dance, were gone through in order, there would thus be several companies each year whose members were eligible to vow any one of the Dances, and our informants were all under the impression that one or more of the Dances was given each summer. It seems quite clear that the Law Enforcer Dance was vowed only by the older levels of the active warriors. After having gone through this rite, these men more or less retired as "old men," and, having "sat on the sage," acquired certain privileges and freedom denied to their fellow tribesmen who had not yet gone through this Dance. These "old men" acted as ceremonial grandfathers, i.e. sponsors and teachers, for others going through the various lodges, but were no longer active as Stars or Wolf-men. They became members of an undifferentiated group of elders, the ranks of their original company having no doubt been drastically thinned out by the time they would have arrived at this status.

If the above interpretation be correct, there would be three age divisions: the "young men," those meeting in companies; the "middle-aged, mature men," whose companies had joined either the Stars or the Wolf-men, and, having gone through the Fly Dance, were eligible to vow the other Dances; the "old men" who had gone through the Law Enforcer's Dance and were no longer active in the Star and Wolf-men societies, except two of their number, one of whom served as announcer in each.

The young men, who together formed the company, being of approximately the same age, were tied together by bonds of friendship and there were apparently not a few pairs of "inseparable friends" in each company. One of our informants, Cora Chandler, indicated that the bonds holding together the members of a company were so intimate that marriage between their children was

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taboo. This was the case regarding the children of "inseparable friends," but whether or not it was so regarding the children of all members of the company, mutual hospitality was frequently extended among the members—"a man would most often invite the members of his age group." Further, it was not unusual for members of the same company to go hunting and on raiding and revenge parties together. If a young man were killed at war and his body brought home, the members of his company were said to have assembled and danced around his bier, sometimes sobbing and crying as they danced.

As members of either one or other of the two larger societies they joined with members of other companies, in the Stars and Wolf-men respectively, to perform their proper social dance and to participate in activities such as gambling, horse-racing, "bragging contests," and so on, wherein they could compete with members of the opposite moiety. An individual seemingly tended to choose his serious enemy-friends from among those of the rival organization and thus is explained the spirit of competition which Kroeber notes between the Stars and "other companies." [18]

The Societies

The Stars and Wolf-men societies were organized along identical lines and were distinguished from each other only in details of procedure.

Each society included approximately half the total number of able-bodied warriors in the tribe. They each had two renowned men as leaders—two Star leaders of relatively recent times having been Comes A-flying and Crazy Bull; two Wolf-men leaders, Skinner and Strikes On Top. The leaders remained mounted when the others of the society were marching on foot in preparation for their dance, and carried whips at the dance as insignia. These men were supposed to have been outstanding warriors who had while mounted actually counted coup against the enemy. Two members of the last-admitted company served as *atsa'an* (waiters, messengers) at the dances, and each society had an announcer, presumably chosen from among the "old men" who had gone through the Law Enforcer Dance.

[18] Kroeber, 1908, p. 234.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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462 she herself had picked or dug. In preparing the material for
476 storage, too, the women would sit in a big circle, pounding cherries
[251] for instance, one woman helping to crush the cherries brought in by another. But, again, while it lightened the work of an individual woman who might have gathered more than the others, there was no pooling of resources. Sociability and friendship were apparently the chief motives for joining such a work group.

463 While there was a slight amount of occupational specialization, there was no real division of labor in the sense that persons with, say, supernatural power to cure, and who were well paid for their services, would be supported by this means alone. Nor could a man live, for instance, by specializing in raiding and raising horses. Every man, whatever else he might do, would have to make at least an attempt to hunt. Similarly, regardless of the temporary division of tasks which might be assigned among the women of the household, no individual woman could profit sufficiently through her ability to cut and fit lodge covers or through her ability to embroider well. Some, who were more skilled at one task than another, might perhaps devote more time and energy to that pursuit, but the rewards therefor were more in the nature of prestige than of direct economic advantage. An old woman for instance might be adept at making buffalo-hair rope. Men desiring to have it, would give her things in exchange for it, but it is doubtful if she would receive sufficient from this one type of manufacture to make her independent of relatives, even so far as food was concerned.

464 The potential supply of labor consisted in all able-bodied men of
[588] the tribe from the age of about 17 or 18, at which time a young man was sufficiently skilled to hunt seriously, and of all able-bodied females from about the age of twelve, the time at which the
[162] average girl was married and was supposed to have been trained to woman's work. The unbalance of the sexes in favor of females, a marked feature in the population of the northern plains tribes,[*]
461 plus the fact that the tasks allotted to women could be begun at a much earlier age than those undertaken by men, meant that the amount of labor contributed by the woman, in manufacturing economic goods, was greater than the amount of labor available

[*] Cf. Wissler, 1936 (a), p. 38.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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ther" includes mother's sister, female cousin, father's brother's wife. This was neatly illustrated in an instance given by Mary Ereaux. "My mother's cousin's husband came to my house a few weeks ago and wanted to ask me something about arrangements for the pop concession at the Fair. It was a matter of serious business and he and I stood, each looking in a different direction, talking only about the matter in hand. After he had left, my son-in-law, who is not an Indian, and who does not understand the Gros Ventre language, said: 'Mother, you looked as though you were mad at that man.' So I told him: 'In the Indian way, that man would be the same as my father, because his wife would be in the same relation to me as my mother, so we never talk unless necessary and never look at each other while talking.'"

The term "aunt" is reserved for father's sister and female cousins, and "uncle" for mother's brother and male cousins. Here, too, heightened reserve characterized the cross-sex relationship. "A man would not address his 'aunt' directly unless by chance she would be the only one there and he needed information. He would under no circumstances linger to make conversation with her. The same for a woman and her 'uncle.'"

Parents-in-law

The respect between members of the opposite sex who are of contiguous generations was most apparent in the avoidance between mother-in-law and son-in-law. This required that the two neither look at nor speak to each other at any time. It was stated that some men disregarded these rules after the death of the wife, "but most used to keep them all the time." There was one case mentioned in which the son-in-law of a very old woman told his wife: "Your mother is getting very old now. We won't see each other much longer anyway. It would be all right for your mother to come in to our lodge." Both Coming Daylight and Singer insisted nevertheless that, should such a proposal be made, the son-in-law would be the one to make the initiative, never the mother-in-law.

The avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law was almost as strictly observed, in that a woman could not look directly at her father-in-law when she spoke to him, and she did not

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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CHAPTER VII

BIRTH AND INFANCY

Conception and Contraception

It was a common belief among the Gros Ventres that for conception to occur, sex relations must continue over a period of time, conception could not occur as the result of one copulation. The fact that a girl would be given in marriage before she reached physiological maturity tended to confirm this belief, which is also linked with another one, namely, that a girl would not menstruate unless and until she had experienced sex relations. This latter belief is reflected in comments made by old women concerning the young unmarried girls of the present day. Coming Daylight and Singer remarked on several occasions: "Nowadays girls are 'terrible.' They menstruate and have well-developed figures before they are married." These signs of physical maturity the old women take as absolute evidence of loose conduct on the part of the girl, regardless of what the facts in the individual case may be.

The Gros Ventres apparently recognized some relationship between conception and lactation. Coming Daylight, for instance, said: "The Indian women claim that they didn't become pregnant so soon if they nursed their babies. They always used to carry their infants about with them because, if they went far away and left them, their milk might spoil. The old-timers used to say that if a woman took good care of her children and kept them close to her, her family would not increase so rapidly. It is the young ones nowadays who have the bottle-fed babies!"

There were certain precautions, too, that a woman should take to keep her offspring properly spaced. "If you sit in the place from which a pregnant woman has just risen, you will conceive immediately. Dispose of the afterbirth quickly. Destroy all clothing worn during pregnancy, even moccasins, or give them to some woman past child-bearing age. If a woman put these clothes on again she would soon become pregnant. Nowadays though mo-

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842 [787] pressed this desire early in life and volunteered the following story of her experience.

[587] "My first husband, Dressed in White, went out hunting and brought back a lot of buffalo meat. I had my robe spread out just inside the door and he threw all the meat on it. Being hungry, I sat down there and was just about to eat the raw liver when he said: 'Wait! Don't eat that.' When I asked why not, he countered with the query: 'Do you like children?' To which I replied: 'You know I love children. I go wherever there is a baby—I love to have them on my lap.' So he said: 'Well, it is your fault that this is going to happen.' He took the oval piece of meat from the upper front quarter and roasted it in the coals. He then threw it to me in a careless way, instead of passing it to me as usual, and said: 'Here, you can have that for your son. You eat this plain—don't eat any tallow with it.' although they usually ate tallow with such lean meat. I said in disgust: 'E:ka:kya! I have always liked children,' and flung the meat out of the door. He said: 'Now that you have done this, you are going to have children from now on.' So, as he predicted, not long after that I became pregnant with my firstborn who was a boy. Unfortunately this boy died and I often wondered if it happened because I threw the meat too violently on that occasion when my husband had offered me the opportunity to choose whether or not I wished to bear children." Incidentally she remarked many times that she is happy she chose as she did,—otherwise now she would be all alone and her children have been so good to her.

The telling of the above incident brought to Coming Daylight's mind another, which confirms her belief in the relation between [595] "medicine" and conception. "Crow Bull, my mother's brother, [582] had four wives. His first wife did not have any children. Then he married an Assiniboine woman and still later took a third wife. Neither of the latter had children either until one time Crow Bull got mad. His third wife wanted to leave him for another man, but her relatives sent her back to Crow Bull. He, however, slept across from her bed and did not have intercourse with her. Shortly after this the Assiniboine woman did something to displease him and so he made up his mind: 'These two wives of mine [789] are going to have children and settle down!' He had an old-fash-

CHAPTER VIII

CHILDHOOD

858 In the days before the buffalo disappeared and before formal schooling was available, childhood, it was said, for girls was shorter and for boys was longer than at present. A girl was ordinarily [582] given in marriage before she was twelve years old—certainly before she attained physiological maturity. A boy on the other hand, though seemingly anxious to participate in hunting and in war as soon as he was able, was not forced to bear the full responsibilities of adulthood until the end of adolescence. While there was considerable variation from family to family in the amount of time required of children in training for practical tasks, all enjoyed a considerable amount of "free time."

PLAY

857 Singer and Coming Daylight, the two oldest of our informants,
526 in recalling the amusements and pastimes of their youth, decided that sliding down hills was one of the most pleasurable as it could be done at any time of the year. In winter, when there was snow, [493] the boys used a kind of sled made by lashing buffalo rib-bones together. Girls managed just as well by simply sitting on their robes and holding between their legs the end which usually hung free. In summer a stiff buffalo hide was used for sliding down the grassy slopes.[1] When the water was frozen, boys and girls alike [524] skated with their feet on the ice, thus clearing a slick surface on which to spin their tops made of horn.

857 Swimming, however, was the great sport in summer. Girls left
526 their dresses close to the bank, those of the older girls in a neat row closest to the edge and those of the smaller girls in the next
481 row. Beginners used the dog-paddle, but the boys developed profi-

[1] For this and some other types of amusement, see Kroeber, 1908, pp. 190–91.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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stantly admonished to stay at home after they were married and not to go visiting and gossiping with other women. Mothers told their daughters to be respectful to their husbands. When still very young, a girl was taught to "always make a lot over a man." She started with her father and was responsible, for instance, for seeing to it that in the morning when he awakened there was water beside him so he could wash his face before going for his morning bath, and that his breakfast would be ready for him when he came back therefrom. These are the kinds of things girls would be expected to do later for their husbands.

All during the time they were learning domestic skills, girls were told that they should keep everything that they own nicely and to have on hand everything they may need. It was not good to run around and borrow. "Keep your house clean and keep everything in good order, then your husband will like to stay at home." Again, "Don't let your husband's moccasins wear out before you make another pair. Always have things prepared ahead of time." Girls were told, too, that good wives took their husband's moccasins off for them when they came home tired, and so on.

Coming Daylight always admonished her daughters: "Never talk back to your husband. Women have fiery tongues when they get mad, and that is bad." It was nearly always taken for granted by others that the wife was to blame if her husband beat her. Since it was customary for very young girls to marry men very much older than they, such husbands took upon themselves the role of disciplinarian.

While marriage was taken for granted, apparently a girl was free to accept or to reject medicine power. Neither girls nor women went on power quests, but some individuals were vouchsafed some kinds of supernatural power in dreams. While the experience of Coming Daylight may be unique, it is illuminating. "Even before I was married, I had a particular kind of dream which indicated power to extract illness from the body of a patient. This dream occurred four nights in succession. Each morning I would tell my grandmother about it. The old woman got angry each time and told me not to talk about it, to keep it to myself so that I would become a great doctor. But I had already

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CHAPTER IX

MARRIAGE

Polygyny and the Child-bride

The institution of the child-bride, combined with polygyny, was characteristic of Gros Ventre marriage up to about 1880. How far back it was practiced is difficult to say. Our informants who themselves were married off as children of ten or eleven to their first husbands about the year 1865, took the custom for granted and so far as they knew "it had always been that way."[1]

All girls were given in marriage before puberty, and usually as wives to older men with independent households. Because of the disparity in age between husband and child-bride, many of these girls were widowed early and remarriage was quickly arranged for them, even if the widow were not claimed by her husband's brother. Moreover, divorce or separation initiated by the husband was relatively easy and frequent. Consequently the majority of Gros Ventre women knew at least three or four different husbands, and often in fairly rapid succession. Upon successive remarriages the wife's age came to approximate more closely that of her husband.

Young men were not eligible for marriage until about twenty. By that time a young man would have attained proficiency in hunting and have taken the first steps in ceremonial life, being a member of one or other of the two adult men's societies, either the Wolf-men or the Stars. In addition he should have war-deeds to his credit and some property of his own, especially horses stolen from the enemy, in order to qualify as husband. In view of the fact, however, that very young girls were given more often to older already-married men, most young men marrying for the first time had as wife "an older experienced woman." Actually

[1] It was believed that a girl could not menstruate until after she had experienced sexual intercourse. If, therefore, a girl had her first menses before she had been given in marriage, her family would be disgraced.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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582 587 this meant that a young man's first wife was not necessarily "older" in years than he, but that she was "experienced" in marriage, having been either widowed or divorced, perhaps several times.

Only as an exception was a bachelor married to a child-bride. [543] One case of the kind which was recalled concerned a young man who was a "beloved-child" and consequently highly favored by his parents. He however refused to "settle down" when his parents suggested various marriage partners to him, and acceded to their request only when they obtained for him the hand of a young girl who had not previously been married.

582 595 587 Young men just starting their careers were urged to seek as wives among the "older" women, those who were known as "good workers" and who had acquired some property of their own. A wife of this kind could help him become established, and "if he amounted to anything" it would not be long before he could take a second wife, perhaps a younger sister of his first one. Then, as he became more prominent, he would acquire one or two additional wives.[2] To this type of man child-brides usually were given. It was said that an outstanding man had three or four wives at the same time, but conditions were such that he would have had a dozen different ones in the course of his career.

587 595 A man was considered fortunate if he obtained as wife the oldest of several sisters as the chances were great that these others might be offered to him. "If a man married the oldest girl in a family, and her folks liked him and saw that he was a good provider and that he was trying to live right, they would give him the two or three others as they came of age." Many instances were given wherein several sisters were married to the same man. On the other hand it was said that, if a man, who was already married to one or more sisters, asked for another, he might be refused and that "there was nothing he could do about it."

Since the levirate was permitted, it was possible that a man could claim the wife or wives of his deceased brother. This was seemingly carried out infrequently, however, since only two instances could be recalled.[3] Of these two, one involved Coming

[2] For a discussion of the economic basis of polygyny, see pp. 73–74.

[3] "The brother of a dead man sometimes married his widow, but this was not always the case." Kroeber, 1908, p. 180.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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Daylight and her sister, who were married, for a short while after their first husband died, to his classificatory brother. The other concerned an outstanding woman, Woman Chief, who was said to have been so highly valued by her husband's people that "she was kept in his family by marrying her to three brothers [successively]."

Regulations

Marriage was prohibited for those related by blood, no matter how remote the tie. If, however, a couple were in "good faith," so to speak, and it was discovered later on that they were distant kin, it was not considered necessary for them to separate on that account.[4] Affinal relatives were likewise barred as possible marriage partners, except those who were classified as in-laws of the same generation.[5] In other words, the levirate and sororate were permitted, so that any who addressed each other as brother-in-law and sister-in-law respectively were possible mates, but relatives-by-marriage in any other category were prohibited from contracting marriage. The far-reaching effects of this latter regulation can be seen from the following case. "Not so many years ago, a Gros Ventre woman was the subject of a great deal of gossip because she married late in life a man who, many years previously, had for a time been married to a widow of her maternal uncle. People didn't like it and thought she shouldn't have married that man, even though times had changed and the whites wouldn't count them as being related to each other at all."

Arrangements

As a rule, marriage arrangements were made between the husband-to-be and one or other of the bride's male kinsmen,—father, uncle or brother. Either side could take the initiative, but the bride herself was not consulted. Coming Daylight summed up the prevailing attitude in this way: "When I was young, a girl's life was not her own. When a girl was about seven she was sent away from her home to a grandmother or widowed aunt to be trained to do a woman's work.

[4] See also the discussion of band affiliation and exogamy, pp. 29–31.

[5] For kinship classification, see pp. 124–25.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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CHAPTER X

OLD AGE AND DEATH

It is the opinion of the now aged Gros Ventres that the proportion of old persons was much greater in the past than it has been since they have taken up the white man's ways; and further, that the aged then retained their health and vigor to a greater degree.[1] One old woman stated that when she was young, there used to be many old people, but that they died off when there were no more buffalo. She added: "People lived to a good old age on the things that the Supreme Being provided,—roots, wild vegetables and fruits, dried meats and berries. In those days, too, they drank broth instead of tea and coffee. Old folks didn't lose their teeth then, although even young girls do nowadays. Their teeth eventually got worn down, but they seldom pulled them. In fact, if an old person should lose a tooth, he thought it was awful and was sure that he was ready for the grave. Furthermore, people didn't get white hair until they were ready for 'old age sleep'—very old people sleep most of the time—yet now one sees middle-aged and even younger people with gray hair like the whites have."

Status and Treatment of the Aged

It was believed that a person who had lived to a ripe old age had been privileged to do so by the Supreme Being. Therefore, they reasoned, if you are good to old people, these in turn will pray to the Supreme Being for your health, long life, and success. Children were instructed explicitly to be good to the aged,—to feed them, to clothe them, and to help them in difficulties,—as well as to seek out those so blessed and ask for their prayers. It was

[1] Allowance should of course be made for the fact that "old age" is a relative term. When it was said that young men were urged to marry "older experienced women," this referred to a woman of perhaps twenty to twenty-five. See pp. 171–72. A woman on the northern plains was "old" at forty, according to Denig, p. 513.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

793 such an official keeper and was merely held by someone for the time being.

From data supplied mostly by The Boy and Coming Daylight, it is possible to trace the fortunes of the Flat Pipe during the last hundred years. Somewhere about 1850 the Flat Pipe keeper was Deer, who was succeeded by "Bear-going-along-side-of-hill," from whom it was ceremonially transferred about 1860-65 to The Boy's father, Lame Bull. One or two of Lame Bull's successors died before completing the customary four-year term, and Lame Bull took the Pipe back. About 1873-75 it was ritually transferred to Crow Bull, Coming Daylight's mother's brother and a good friend of Lame Bull, as a result of a vow made by Crow Bull to take the keepership if the wife, who had been captured by the Piegan, should get back safely to him, which she did.

Coming Daylight gave the story as follows:

793 727 "In the 1869 battle between the Gros Ventres and the Piegan, a wife of my uncle, Crow Bull, was captured by the Piegan. After some time the man who captured her and who had taken her as wife saw her crying and asked her: 'Why are you crying?' She replied: 'I am lonesome for my children.' She had borne no children during her stay with the Piegan. So he told her: 'All right. I am a man, a real chief. I will let you go back to your children. But it would be dangerous for you to go on horseback. You must walk.'

793 "So on the sly he fixed up a big traveling dog to pack food and she made moccasins for the journey. He told her which way to go, this is, by way of Fort Benton where there were some Piegan [582] and Gros Ventre women married to whites. He also told her she must travel by night lest the Piegan capture her again, and he accompanied her quite a way on her journey.

"After two days on the road, traveling by night and hiding in the day, she reached Fort Benton safely just at daybreak on the third. When she got there she did not know where to go. She saw someone emptying water, who looked like an Indian woman, so she went up to her. The woman said: 'Oh, where did you come from?' 'I came from the Piegan,' she replied, 'my Piegan husband there let me go.' The woman said: 'After you have eaten I will

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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old doctor. He went out in the hills to look for the calf but could not find it any place. He was near my cousin's and thought he would go over. My cousin's people had just butchered that same morning and they made signs to my husband: 'You are just in time. Now you can come in and eat.' But he said: 'I am in a hurry. I am looking for a calf to butcher for my wife. She is awfully hungry. She has not eaten since she was taken sick.' My cousin said: 'I will give you some [meat].' So she put liver and tripe and different things in a sack. My husband came back and threw the sack of meat on the floor and said: 'Your sister [cousin] sent this to you. They have just butchered.'

"I lost no time and rushed over to this sack of meat: I saw a piece of liver in there and took a knife and went to slice off a piece. The old medicine man said: 'Slow now. You should cook it first.' But I said: 'I just cannot. I am going to eat it this way.' I ate it raw like that with some tallow. It seemed like from then on I was just myself again.

"All I know about this person who appeared to me was that he was a man, but I did not recognize him. He was a bitä:tao (soul, spirit shadow).

"It was the medicine man's wife who did the doctoring for me in the case. She did a kind of quiet doctoring. She boiled roots and rubbed me all over with them. They called that woman Nätsiθä ('Cree woman') and she really was a Cree. They say those Cree medicines are good."

Coming Daylight gave two accounts, in 1940 and 1945, of another personal experience in being cured. The two accounts supplement each other. Here follows the 1945 account with some detailed interpolated in parentheses from the 1940 one.

"When my first little boy (by my husband, Dressed In White) died, he died, I think because my breasts were bad. Then I had a girl baby. When this girl baby was getting older and already learning to sit up, I was still nursing her of course, and my breasts went bad again, that is, the milk was bad. (They were tight and full and hard . . . the infant had diarrhea and got very weak.) I was suffering with my breasts and my husband thought he should get a doctor to do something for me. So he got a certain man, a great doctor, but one of whom the women were afraid and whom

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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755 Good Singer. The one that called her in made a smudge, with fire of buffalo chips on which some kind of medicine—sweet pine, or sweet grass,—was sprinkled. Good Singer then smudged herself, putting the smoke up to her face four times and then rubbing it on her breast. Then she sang her song [Singer here sang it], the burden of which was: 'My pipe is lying here!' Then she was ready to doctor.

"She hit herself on the chest, and a bead came out of her mouth. She put the bead on the top of her foot and extracted it from the sole thereof. She next smudged the head four times by putting it to her mouth, and then laid the bead down.

"Next she went to the patient and worked on him, sucked at the spot where his pain was, and after showing the people what she extracted from him swallowed it, and named the one who had caused his sickness. Then she swallowed her own medicine [the bead] and smudged at her mouth four times. They gave her a lot of things for doing that,—horses and blankets and such things."

Singer also gave details on two other cures, one by White Weasel, the other by Bad Bad Bull.

"Once I hooked up the wagon and went for wood. We were living at the time down the Milk River Valley. While getting the wood, all of a sudden I was struck with a sharp pain in the back of my neck. It was like a sharp pinch. I went back with my load of wood. I was married at the time to an Assiniboine named Axe Handle. I told him: 'The Assiniboines have shot me [with medicine].' He told me: 'No, I guess you haven't had that happen to you.'

[582]

"This was a little before the Fourth of July and I went to the celebration suffering with that pain in the neck. After that they began to call all kinds of Indian doctors for me—Stiffarm, Bill Jones, Ragged Robe. Each pulled out something, a piece of skin or something. And they had to give a lot of things away to each doctor. But none of them did me any good.

"We were living close to a friend who told me: 'The only one who can cure you is my brother [White Weasel, a Gros Ventre].' So I called him and they gave him a lot of things,—about seven